

Accessibility Subgroup  
Vote Indiana Team  
April 4, 2003

Members Present: Suellen Jackson-Boner, Col. Joe Ryan, Nick Rhoad, Kristi Robertston, Dick Dodge, Secretary of State Todd Rokita, Mike Rothrock (proxy for Dee Ann Hart), John Laramore. Facilitators: Anita Kolkmeier and Sarah Taylor

Others present: Julia Vaughn (Count Us In), Edelle Rothrock (Count Us In), Stephanie Miller (Count Us In) and Tom Gallagher (Protection and Advocacy Services)

The subgroup started with introductions. There were two corrections to the minutes from March 21, 2003. The quote on page 3 of the minutes need to be changed from \$25/day to \$25/hour. Also, Indianapolis needs to be inserted before Resource Center for Independent Living.

The subgroup began by discussing the accessibility survey process. Col. Ryan brought up the idea of this being a project for graduate students around the state. This idea was triggered by the high estimates of the cost of a statewide survey. This concept involves using a talented group of individuals that would use a limited time frame (semester) and little costs.

Mike Rothrock brought up another idea of dividing the state into 3 sections and creating a central location within each section for training. He also reiterated the point that he wanted to keep the members of the disability community involved as much as possible. He also suggested having one survey for the entire state with a deadline to get all of the surveys back in. He also noted that it is important to complete the survey on Election Day and feedback on the process is important.

The group tried to clarify how the survey was related to the certification process for the counties. Col. Ryan asked if the survey was completed on Election Day if would it fit the time frame for the plan.

Suellen Jackson-Boner stated that she wanted a survey that is a constant and everyone agrees what is accessible and that it would relate to the certification. The other part of the certification involving the inclusion of individuals with disabilities. The onus would be on the contractee (if using RFP) to show that they are using those individuals.

The group then concluded that the survey would be used as verification and everyone is starting from the same point. The survey would also determine if the polling place would remain the polling place or if for costs reasons it needed to be moved to a more accessible place. Nick Rhoad thought that most license branches would comply with the ADA and they could be used as alternative sites.

Col. Ryan thought that the plan should include language from HAVA's Title III as a mission statement for this group.

Kristi said that **“the survey is an independent source to verify what the counties are certifying.”** Everyone agreed with that statement.

The group was given a copy of a survey from Florida (“Department State Division of Elections; ADA Polling Place Survey Checklist”) and Iowa (“Appendix A; Polling Place Accessibility Survey Form”) Jon Laramore was impressed with Florida’s survey. “This is the direction that we want to go.” Secretary Rokita suggested that we start from scratch with our survey, with regard to the use of data previously sent in by counties because that data could not have been collected in a standardized fashion or process which would then flaw the results. Jon commented that these are good models to start the process.

Kristi pointed out that the Iowa survey seemed easier to understand.

Suellen said that the American Association for People with Disabilities was also sending information to the Governor’s Council from other states.

**The group reached the consensus that the survey should be uniform and the definition should be consistent with the ADA** which is consistent with HAVA and current Indiana law. It was pointed out that the ADA gives you the maximum standards and these standards do not need to be expanded. **Also stated again was that the survey would be used as a check/ verification on the certification. A vendor would be chosen to complete the survey.**

Kristi liked Col. Ryan’s idea of using students .

Suellen said that the Governor’s Council will broadcast to the disability community the opportunities for involvement that are available under HAVA.

The group also wanted to find a central agency or group to complete the survey to guarantee uniformity. Sarah Taylor asked if surveys from counties that just completed them recently would be utilized to save costs. Kristi said that it was best to start from scratch, but if it came down to a no funds issue then the previous surveys could be considered.

Suellen suggested that a small group work on the survey itself and then present it to the group for approval. She offered to help on that project. **Therefore, there was consensus that we would use a standardized survey and leave it up to the Governor’s council to draft. Kristi offered her assistance in reviewing the survey.**

The group then discussed performance measures relating to accessibility training. Kristi mentioned that the IED completes training through various associations. The election division has conducted many break out groups at conferences.

Todd suggested that the training material should be done in connection with the Governor’s council. Suellen again said that the Governor’s council would broadcast the opportunities, but she was not sure if she could find an individual in each county who would be responsive to being involved in the advisory committee to help with the survey and selection of polling sites. She said that they could add a workshop to their statewide conference to address election opportunities and training. The Governor’s council can work to get partners in this process and can facilitate the relationship.

The group questioned when the polling site had to be chosen by the commissioner. Kristi said that under the Indiana code, the sites had to be set 29 days prior to the election. Sarah added that a small amount of sites are moved every election due to construction or last minute emergencies.

Kristi thought that there might be more combining of sites because of the HAVA requirements on accessibility. Mike indicated that Bartholomew County is considering combining some sites.

The group agreed that the concept of the county election board working with an advisory council should not be legislated, but it would be tied to the certification.

The question arose concerning whether or not the advisory council is an ongoing council? Sarah also asked if the council relationship should be checked in the reports to the election division.

Dick asked why you would have to do it year after year. Mike pointed out that the little things (i.e. has the asphalt crumbled) needs to be checked annually to see if still accessible.

Sarah asked about the postcards that she recalled that ADA Indiana prepared for voters with impairments to return following their voting experience. Results were then shared with county clerks. Suellen said that they can continue to do that. The post cards are a good goal and measure.

Next was the question to determine if poll workers got trained. Dick asked that we have a simple form to report this. Kristi said that we need something a little less formal to track.

Suellen suggested that the post cards could be drafted with questions that tie to the top priorities of the survey.

Tom Gallagher brought up the point that if they are all aware of the complaint process, we could track the number of complaints that pertain to accessibility.

On the maintenance of effort point, Mike thought that the county should keep their level of spending. The group also thought that the survey was a strong maintenance of effort. Tom Gallagher suggested using this language, "can use money to supplement but not to supplant."

Col. Ryan also suggested that we needed a time line for ballots especially for faxes for military voters. Col. Ryan wanted us to take a step forward and educate voters on military voting. **THIS SHOULD BE A PERFORMANCE MEASURE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION! Col. Ryan will get the point of contact for the DOD.**

Public Comment:

Tom Gallagher: He reminded the subgroup not to underestimate the power of the audit for the survey. The county needs to be reminded that they need to play fair because they can be audited. The survey should be self reporting after training with the understanding that there will be a number of audits.

Julia Vaughn: Survey needs to be done to get the best use of the HAVA funds. This is the first step to stretching the dollars. The survey needs to take a snapshot of each polling site to determine if it is accessible or worth the money to make accessible. .

Tom Gallagher also gave us information on the Protection and Advocacy Services Commission. It is a federally funded independent state agency with 6 different programs and a 13 member Commission. Because they are independent they can litigate against the state. They have 1 million constituents that they serve. His agency will guide the members of the community with disabilities through the HAVA complaint procedure if necessary.

Every state has a P & A. The Governor decides how the agency is organized. For more information on the Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services check out their web site, [www.in.gov/ipas/](http://www.in.gov/ipas/)

Sarah reminded the group that they would receive the straw document for the plan on April 8, 2003 and the entire team would meet on April 11 to discuss the draft.